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# A CHRONICLE OF THE CANADIAN WEST

North-West Mounted Police

Report for 1875

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COMMISSIONER FRENCH



**HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF ALBERTA**



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# A CHRONICLE OF THE CANADIAN WEST

NORTH-WEST MOUNTED POLICE  
REPORT FOR 1875

With Introduction  
by  
S. W. HORRALL

Historical Society of Alberta  
Box 4035, Station C  
Calgary  
1975



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# INTRODUCTION

Towards the end of 1874, the Commissioner of the North-West Mounted Police, Lieutenant Colonel G. A. French, began preparing an official report upon the operation of the Force which he had commanded for the past year. The Commissioner's account of the activities of the N.W.M.P. for 1874 was subsequently printed as an official government publication in the *Sessional Papers of Canada*, or the Blue Books as they were familiarly known at the time. The 1874 report was to be the first of a valuable collection of annual records documenting the history of the unique police force which the Canadian government had started to organize in 1873 to bring law and order to the country's western frontier. Each year these published reports provided a detailed description of the operations and organization of the N.W.M.P. A typical report consisted of a general statement by the Commissioner of the events of the past year, reports from his subordinate officers commanding the many posts, accounts by the Force's surgeons and veterinary surgeons on the health of men and animals, as well as tables showing the distribution of the police throughout the West.

Although the North-West Mounted Police was to become the Royal North-West Mounted Police in 1904 and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police in 1920, the practice started by Commissioner French has been continued each year by his successors down to the present day. There have been changes in style, content and format, but with the exception of two years, an official report on the operation of the Mounted Police has been published annually in the *Sessional Papers* since 1874. The two years for which no reports were printed were 1875 and 1933. In the latter case, the record for 1933 was incorporated in the annual report for 1934. No statement, however, of the operation of the Mounted Police was ever published for 1875.

Why the government did not produce an official chronicle on the N.W.M.P. for 1875 is not precisely known. The necessary material for a report was put together by French and forwarded to Ottawa, but it never appeared in print. It is possible that Ottawa felt that the report was not complete enough to proceed with. The Commissioner's own account only covered the activities of less than half of the men under his command. His report had almost nothing to say of the fate of the three divisions under Assistant Commissioner Macleod at Fort Macleod, or of the progress of the men at Fort Saskatchewan commanded by Superintendent Jarvis.

Alternately, the government may have deliberately avoided publishing the report in order to allay some of the criticism it had encountered over its organization of the Mounted Police. In both the press and parliament, the Liberal cabinet of Prime Minister Alexander Mackenzie had been attacked in 1875 for its management of the N.W.M.P. The report itself would only have added weight to this opposition. Among other things, it exposed French's own disagreement with the government over the choice of Swan River as a site for the Force's headquarters.

Whatever the reason, the report was quietly filed away and soon forgotten. The original handwritten documents eventually disappeared. In all probability they were among the files on the early organization of the Force



which were burned when fire gutted the office of the Comptroller of the N.W.M.P. in Ottawa in 1897. Fortunately, a typed copy survived. It was not until the 1930's, however, that it was brought to light again from among the records of the R.C.M.P. and its value recognized as an historical document. It was from this source that a copy was recently provided to the Historical Society of Alberta as a manuscript for the present publication.

In addition to a table showing the distribution of the Force's strength, the 1875 report has four parts. It begins, first of all, with a report by the Commissioner. This report is in many ways a disappointing document. The annual report for 1874 had given a detailed account of the organization of the Mounted Police, of its expedition from Manitoba to the Rocky Mountains, and of the establishment of a post in the foothills by almost half the Force under Assistant Commissioner Macleod. Following his return march eastwards to the isolated headquarters at Swan River, Commissioner French had little direct communication with the contingents he had left farther west. Macleod's post was not linked by telegraph, neither was the detachment under Superintendent Jarvis which had left the main column during the expedition in 1874 and proceeded north west to Fort Edmonton. Communications with these posts in 1875 was slow and unreliable. French's report, therefore, tells us almost nothing about their activities. This is really unfortunate, because it was in what is now the Province of Alberta that the most significant developments in the history of the Mounted Police were taking place. It is almost silent, for example, on Macleod's success in combatting the whiskey trade, on his relations with the Indian tribes, or on the establishment of important new posts at Fort Calgary, Fort Walsh and Fort Saskatchewan.

The Commissioner's report is followed by that of the Force's first veterinary surgeon, John L. Poett. On the vast open plains, the Mounted Police were to be dependant for many years on the horse as a means of transportation. The veterinarian's task was to ensure that the horses were kept in good health and provided with proper feed and accommodation. Poett had received his professional training at the Royal Veterinary College in Edinburgh, Scotland. Before his appointment to the N.W.M.P. he had practiced in Stratford, Ontario.

Probably the most interesting part of the 1875 record is the report submitted by the Surgeon, John Kittson. In the first place it also covers 1874, providing another valuable source of history for the March West. Kittson was the scion of a fur-trading family from Quebec. He took his medical education at McGill University and was appointed Surgeon of the N.W.M.P. in April, 1874. As medical officer, Kittson accompanied the Force on its march westward from Manitoba (in the report he erroneously dates this as commencing on July 7th, 1874 instead of July 8th). On the return journey he contracted typhoid which was then reaching epidemic proportions in Manitoba and the North-West Territories. As a result of the long illness that followed, Kittson was unable to complete his report in time for it to be included in the 1874 *Sessional Papers*. His report for 1875, therefore, covers two years.

One of the interesting things about the Surgeon's statement is that it lacks the officious and restrained tone so typical of most N.W.M.P. reports. Instead, Kittson allows his own humanity to come through. The result is a report by a scientific and literary-minded man who had a keen eye for the human scene around him. His detailed account of the treatment of the sick is by itself a valuable source on the history of nineteenth century



medical practice. With feeling he tells of the hardship and the morale of the men on the March West. He informs us of the first deaths from typhoid, and the need for suitable physical standards for recruits. Humorously, he comments upon the lowly status of Indian women and his first personal acquaintance with lice. For several years Kittson was later employed by the Department of Indian Affairs to provide medical attention to the Indians around Fort Walsh. In the report he recounts his first compassionate but frustrating attempt to treat these people.

The final part of the 1875 report consists of a confidential memorandum on the N.W.M.P., written by Major-General E. Selby Smyth to the Minister of Justice. During 1875 the government had been criticized for its management of the Mounted Police. In parliament the expedition to the foothills had been labelled a failure and opposition members had called for the re-organization of the Force as part of the Canadian Militia. As a result of this criticism, the government decided to send Selby Smyth, the Commanding General of the Canadian Militia, to the North-West Territories to inquire into the efficiency and organization of the N.W.M.P. A general report of his mission and his findings was published in a lengthy statement in the annual report of the Department of the Militia for 1875. What was not published at the time was this confidential memorandum on his assignment that was addressed to the Minister of Justice, the official responsible for the N.W.M.P.

The confidential report deals with sensitive issues which the government, at the time, was no doubt reluctant to publicize. These include individual assessments on the ability of the Commissioner and other officers, as well as an investigation into the complaints by some of the men that they had not been treated fairly. In its findings, the confidential memorandum differs little from the published report. Major General Selby Smyth found that most of the criticism was groundless, that the Force was soundly organized and had successfully achieved its initial objective of suppressing the whiskey trade.

The publication of the 1875 report fills a vital gap in the documentary sources generally available on the history of the N.W.M.P. During recent years access to it has been limited to a few scholars or researchers. Now, almost one hundred years after it was written, its publication is being made possible by a grant from the Province of Alberta, through the Alberta-R.C.M.P. Century Celebrations Committee. To all who are interested in the early development of the Mounted Police and the history of western Canada, its belated appearance will be a very welcome event.

S. W. Horrall,  
Historian, R.C.M.P.



## COMMISSIONER'S REPORT

North West Territories,  
Canada,  
Swan River Barracks,  
December, 1875.

To the Honourable  
The Minister of Justice,  
Ottawa.

Sir, In compliance with your letter of the 10th day of November, I have the honour to submit the annexed report on the doings of the portion of the Force under my immediate command, from date of leaving Dufferin on 20th May, 1875, to the present date.

1875. May 20th.

On the evening of the 22nd May the Force reached Camp close to Winnipeg, and on the morning of the 24th crossed the Assiniboine and camped within the limits of the City of Winnipeg.

For the next few days arrangements were being made for the march to Swan River, Provisions, Oats, etc., loaded, as also a considerable amount extra of Camp Equipment and light baggage, owing to the fact of the Force being accompanied by a number of women and children.

I had arranged to start about the beginning of June, but at that time very heavy rains set in, which compelled me to move the Camp to higher ground, and owing to the saturated state of the Prairie, I gave up the idea of starting until the ground had time to dry, this delay also gave time for the arrival of Paymaster Griffiths and Veterinary Surgeon Poett, twenty one horses, a very welcome addition.

June 16th.

On the 16th June the Force drew out to a Camp about four miles from Winnipeg, and continued the march from the 17th until the 6th July, taking it easy, halting on Sundays, the only delay being made at Shoal Lake, where I established a strong Post. I established Mail carrying Posts at Palestine, Little Saskatchewan, Shoal Lake and Shell River, the details and particulars of the march will be found on reference to my reports, dated 29th June from Shoal Lake, and 10th July from Swan River Barracks.

On arrival at Swan River Barracks, I found from the style of material and workmanship, that it was doubtful if they could be occupied during the ensuing winter, without being plastered and otherwise improved. I consequently reported very fully on the subject in a letter dated 10th July 1875.

July 14th.

Sent Sub-Inspector Walker to Shoal Lake, to make arrangements for escorting General Smyth to this place.

15th.

Sent three men to Fort Pitt, with Oats and provision in Ox-Carts.

18th.

Sent Sub-Inspector Shurtliffe with six men, twenty-one horses, two carts and one wagon to Fort Pitt, as a relay for the General and Party. Performed a good deal of Mounted Drill and Skirmishing about this time.



26th.

Paymaster Griffiths came in from Winnipeg with eight men, seven waggons and fourteen horses. I expected some stores in these waggons, but found to my astonishment that they were loaded mainly with the Paymaster's Baggage, most of which might have come by the Ox-Train, the result of loading these young horses on such a trip was, that scarcely any of them were fit to accompany the General and Party.

July 27th.

General Smyth and Party arrived at 9.30 A.M. The General appeared much surprised at the position of the Barracks and style of workmanship thereon as well as the locality being so far removed from the Main Trail. He shewed me important letters which he had received that morning from Lieut. Governor Morris, and which necessitated the sending of a strong party to Carlton.

July 28th.

Started for Carlton in company with General and Staff, Inspector Crozier, Sub-Inspectors Clark, French and Frechette, Doctor Douglas and Vet. Surgeon Poett, with thirty-eight men and sixty horses, one ambulance and three waggons, besides the General's escort of ten men and nineteen horses. Camped on the Assiniboine five miles west of Fort Pelly. A very bad road through the woods, a fine country as the Touchwood Hills are approached.

August 1st.

Reached Touchwood Hills on the Main Trail, took on Oats and went ahead, passing through a very fine country, with plenty of wood. Reached

August 3rd.

The Canada Pacific Railroad Depot on the High Hills. East, West and South (as far as we could see) extends a sterile plain, a most unpromising looking place for an agriculturist, proceeding north a few miles a better country is reached, but containing large areas of Salt Plains and many Salt Lakes.

August 5th.

Arrived at the South Branch of the Saskatchewan, much disappointed in appearance of river. Instead of the clear blue water met with five hundred miles further up last year, we have a mixture of mud and water almost vieing with the Red River. About fifty miles south of this crossing is the dilution of the River, known as the Moose Woods, a fine alluvial tract according to Hind (whose Maps and Reports on the North West do not receive the attention they deserve, Palliser, a much less careful observer being more usually quoted), it is possible that the South Branch receives its discoloration from the Alluvial soil of the Moose Woods.

Along the banks of the South Branch at this crossing (Batoche's) is the Saint Laurent Roman Catholic Mission, about one hundred half-breeds families reside here, the soil is very good, and there is plenty of Poplar for fuel and fencing, crossing the river in a delapidated ferry, and pushed ahead to Fort Carlton, a distance of eighteen miles, passing through a fine park-like country, good soil. A promising settlement forming at the Duck Lakes, half way between the North and South Branches. At Fort Carlton was very hospitably received by Mr. Clark, Chief Factor of the H.B. Company at this Post. The General and Staff arrived next morning. After full consideration of the circumstances concerning which the Force was brought here, I ar-

ranged with the approval of the General, to leave a Detachment of twelve men for the present, pending approval; for correspondence on these matters I would respectfully call attention to Reports dated 6th August (two reports) and despatch of 17th August.

Major General Smyth inspected the Force on the morning of the 7th, he was pleased to express himself as being very favorably impressed with the Force, and having camped and marched with it for a number of days he had the fullest opportunity for judging. His address to the Force was as follows:-

"I am much pleased at having had the opportunity of seeing so much of the Headquarters Divisions of the Mounted Police Force and to have been able to form an opinion of their efficiency upon the rapid march which you have just made, with so much credit to yourselves.

"There are few mounted troops who would have made such a march of Two Hundred and Seventy Miles in eight days, and brought their horses in, in good working condition to the end of it. I am happy to see the cheerful disposition and good humour which prevails all ranks, and which proves that contentment and good feeling exists throughout.

"I am now satisfied and I never doubted it, that the defamatory letters which have from time to time appeared in the Press, were written by ill-disposed persons and did not give a true statement of this Force, probably by Deserters, who having broken their Oath of Allegiance did not scruple to write untruths when they found the Police Force was not the holiday pastime they had anticipated.

"The Mounted Police Force is the beginning of a new order of things in the North West Territories, prosperity and security will follow in its track.

"I congratulate Colonel French, the Officers and Men, on the excellent condition of this new Force, which will improve from day to day, as time gives opportunity.

"It will be my pleasing duty to make a very favorable report to the Government of all I have seen of the Mounted Police, and if I can be of any service to you at Ottawa, you may rely upon my befriending you whenever I can.

"We are now about to separate and I can only say I wish you success and prosperity in the performance of your important duties in the North West Territories".

I forwarded a copy of the above to you after my return to Headquarters.

August 11th.

On this day I arrived back at the Barracks; there being no enclosure round the Barracks and the probability of the Palisading, shown on Plan, being put up by the Board of Works being very remote, I set all the men I could lay hands on, to make a substantial fence on two sides of the Barracks. While this was going on, I received a despatch from the Lieutenant Governor dated the 11th August, 1875, directing every available man to be sent to the Qu'Appelle via Fort Ellice, thereby doubling the distance to be marched, a rather serious matter when all the best horses had been picked out for the Carlton trip.

August 20th.

I consequently sent Sub-Inspector McIlree down via Shell River, Shoal Lake and Fort Ellice, taking every available man at these points. I had

previously sent instructions to Sub-Inspector Frechette to leave the returning Carlton force at Touchwood Hills, and proceed to the Qu'Appelle with all the horses and men possible; this only amounted to twenty-six horses and fifteen men, as Inspector Crozier and a portion of the Force had been detained at Carlton.

The total force actually at Qu'Appelle amounted to Two Officers, Thirty-four Men and Forty-one Horses.

At Swan River we were at this period completely crippled, having neither men or horses to do anything, our Hay-cutting even was seriously interfered with, as I had to take some men and horses of the farming party.

September 6th.

Inspector Crozier and balance of party returned from Carlton, had to send him back on the 10th to Carlton in accordance with instructions from Ottawa.

September 15th.

The party arrived from Carlton. As the horses had no grain except 1,000 lbs. of oats that I had a chance of sending by a freighter, they were much reduced. Those coming from Carlton being still more so from same cause. This failure of horses for want of Oats is, *and must be a necessary consequence as long as this Force is left unprovided with means of transport for supplies.* Of 27 horses that have died since 1st August, 1875, debility and injury to the system produced by want of feed may be considered to be proximate cause of 17 deaths. The value of those horses would purchase fifty good Oxen, a number capable of transporting a large amount of supplies.

Long marches in these vast Territories must be always productive of loss in horse-flesh; this will be still further increased where forced marches are necessary as will frequently be the case in this Force.

The following table will shew the distances travelled by a large number of the horses:-

June 16th to July 6th - Winnipeg to Swan River, 330 Miles. Most of the horses drawing waggons.

July 27th to August 5th - Swan River to Carlton, 270 Miles.

August - Carlton to Qu'Appelle, 210 miles.

September 15th - Qu'Appelle to Swan River, 110 Miles.

Total - 920 Miles.

Several of the above went on to Fort Pitt, two hundred miles beyond Carlton and back, others made a number of short trips to various places, some of the very best horses being taken on to Edmonton and Fort MacLeod. Another very heavy drag on this portion of the Force is the running of a fortnightly Mail from and to Palestine, a distance of two hundred and thirty miles, thus representing nine hundred and twenty miles of travel every month, this requires our best horses and is very hard on them, the pace necessarily being high. I hope that ere long a properly organized Mail Service may be established through these Territories.

September 19th.

Heard of a Murder at Fort Ellice and despatched Sub-Inspector Clark there, with instructions to take the prisoner and witnesses before the nearest Magistrate.

They were eventually taken to Winnipeg, and the prisoner sentenced to death by the Chief Justice.

September 21st.

Acting Constable and three men with Stores to Carlton.



September 22nd.

Forwarded a Detachment to Qu'Appelle to form a permanent Post here, keeping up communication with the Cypress Hills if necessary - Detachment One Constable and Three Sub-Constables.

September 23rd.

Sub-Inspector Walker arrived from Winnipeg with a Deserter.

September 28th.

Sent Sub-Inspector Frechette to Qu'Appelle and Wood Mountain to arrange about Stores and other matters at both these places.

October 2nd.

Sent a Staff-Constable and two Sub-Constables with thirteen cart horses to Winnipeg.

November 1st.

Sub-Inspector Walker left for a General inspection of "D" Division Outposts, and to make arrangements for the Mail Carriers for the winter.

November 10th.

Sent an Acting Constable and some men with horses and Oxen to assist O'Donnell's Train and bring hay to his half-famished Oxen.

November 20th.

Sent more men and horses to assist Train, which is reported to be in a very bad way, cattle failing and dying all the time, Train can only make four or five miles a day, have been nearly a fortnight making seventy-five miles.

November 21st.

Forty Degrees below Zero last night and Thirty-six below Zero on Church Parade, several Non-Commissioned Officers and Men frost bitten.

November 24th.

Ox-Train arrived at 2.30 P.M.

November 28th.

Forty-one degree below Zero last night, the cold killed four more Oxen; it appears fearfully cruel to have these famishing beasts exposed to such a temperature. Have to give our Hay (which we can so ill afford to lose) to feed the Oxen, have also to give the train as much as they can carry away for use on the road.

November 30th.

Train about to start, have taken some of the Oxen and Steers which we had for beef to help them through, twenty-seven of the Oxen dead so far; all this loss might have been avoided very easily.

During the months of September, October and November, every available man and horse of the Force have been kept employed, mainly assisting the Board of Works Department, sawing lath, drawing sand for Plasterers, etc., a great deal of heavy work had to be done for ourselves, felling timber for cordwood, drawing and sawing wood, threshing, hauling hay, making Root House and Cellar, Slaughter House, making Lofts to Stables, felling and drawing Logs for Guard House, and a variety of other works, which the Department of Public Works was evidently unable to carry out in any reasonable time.

The Detachment at Shoal Lake have been equally busy, building Quarters for themselves, their horses and cattle, cutting and hauling hay and timber, etc., Over One Thousand Carts had been searched by this Detachment between first of July and the 9th of September.

Whisky or other intoxicating liquors were only discovered in one instance, when sixteen gallons of Whisky, Brandy and Wines were destroyed, this liquor was in transit to the West, on a Hudsons Bay Co's Train, and there were circumstances connected with the case, which induced me to write to you a Special Report on 15th Sept, 1875.

I am glad to be able to report that the Quarters at Swan River have been so much improved by the plastering that there are very few complaints of coldness now; the dilatoriness of the Board of Works in not finishing these Barracks is rather annoying, particularly as we are left so short of accomodation that I have neither a room for Service on Sundays or one for a Reading or Recreation Room for the Men; the Guard Room will I suppose be constructed without much further delay, Mr. Sutherland having arrived, they are also constructing latrines for the Married Quarters, and ere long matters will doubtless be as well as they can reasonably be expected to be in such an exposed locality.

All the horses and cattle in my charge, are, with the exception of a few sick ones, in great condition, the rations of Oats have had to be cut down to six pounds, as some nineteen thousand pounds sent by Mr. Nixon did not arrive owing to the Freighters not fulfilling their contract; I am not aware what sort of a contract was made, but I would respectfully suggest an enquiry into the matter, and punishment of the Freighters as an example, for there is no knowing what amount of damage and distress might be caused if Freighters were allowed to imagine that they could leave necessary supplies on the roadside on the approach of winter, without regard to the fact that others might have to risk starvation thereby.

### **Farming.**

The arrangements made for the farming, whereby a few good men were selected for farming and given a direct interest in the result of their labors has proved most satisfactory, I think I may safely say that five times the number of men could not have got through the same work if attempted to be carried out as a general fatigue duty.

The advent of Grasshoppers sadly marred the product both of Grain and Potatoes, inflicting a corresponding loss on the Farming Party, but I would hope under the exceptional circumstances of the case the Department may see fit to take a share of this loss. In the matter of Hay alone an idea may be formed of the advantages of this system, between 500 and 600 tons of Hay cut here and at Shoal Lake will cost the Government about One Dollar per ton, the Hay at Cypress Hills being Twenty-two Dollars per ton, and at Fort MacLeod Fifteen Dollars per ton; as the portions of the Force at those Stations have been virtually removed from my command, I am not in a position to state why a loss of so many thousand dollars should have accrued (as I believe unnecessarily) to the Public.

I annex estimate of farming operations for the past year; the destruction caused by Grasshoppers will be evident.

I have the honor to be,  
Sir,

Your most obedient servant,  
*G. A. French*  
Commissioner, N.W.M.P.

## SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT

Return of Magisterial Prosecutions, Punishments, Fines, Etc. before the Commissioner.

| Defendant                          | Charge   | Pleading | Sentence  |
|------------------------------------|--|----------|---|
| W. E. Jones<br>Trader,<br>Winnipeg | Having intoxicating liquor in his possession in the N.W.T. | Guilty   | Fifty Dollars Fine or One Month's Imprisonment. |

Before Inspector Crozier at Carlton.

|                   |  |               |   |
|-------------------|--|---------------|---|
| Alexr.<br>Stewart | Having in their possession intoxicating liquor in the N.W.T. | Not<br>Guilty | In one case \$200. in the other \$250. the \$50. to pay witnesses fees. |
| One Kelly         |  |               |   |

Some other prosecutions failed for want of evidence.

*G. A. French*  
Commr. N.W.M.P.  
Stp. Magistrate, N.W.T.



# APPENDIX I

Swan River,  
23rd December, 75.

Memorandum from Sub-Inspector Walker  
to  
Lt. Col. French, Commissioner.

Sir,

In answer to your communication dated 21st inst., I have the honor to forward an Estimate of the amount of work done by the farming party at Swan River during the past year.

| Acres         | Crops          |                    |
|---------------|----------------|--------------------|
| 30            | Oats           |                    |
| 2             | Peas           | 450 tons Hay       |
| 1             | Barley         | 20 " Straw         |
| $\frac{1}{2}$ | Wheat          |                    |
| 5             | Turnips        | 3146 yards fencing |
| 4             | Potatoes       |                    |
| $\frac{1}{2}$ | Carrots        |                    |
| $\frac{1}{2}$ | Beans          |                    |
| 27            | Summer Fallow. |                    |

The total amount of breaking done was 70 acres. Ten acres of this was covered with Willow Brush which had to be cut before it could be ploughed. Fifty acres of this ground has been ploughed a second time for next year's crop. Of the above Grain and Root Crops, all that has been harvested was 11600 lbs of Potatoes, about 600 lbs of Peas and 6399 lbs of Potatoes, the remaining crops although looking very promising up to the end of July were destroyed by Grasshoppers. The Oats and Potatoes were also much destroyed as you will see by the very small yield for the quantity of ground under these crops.

I have the honor to be,  
Sir,  
Your obedient servant,  
(Sgd) *James Walker*  
Sub-Inspector.

APPENDIX II  
DISTRIBUTION OF THE NORTH-WEST MOUNTED POLICE  
from latest returns.

| Station        | Officers | Men | Horses | Cattle | Remarks   |
|----------------|----------|-----|--------|--------|---|
| Ft. Edmonton   | 2        | 20  | 21     | 78     | Part of "A" Division                                    |
| Fort MacLeod   |          |     |        |        |   |
| "A" Division   | 1        | 15  | 105    | 38     | Insp. Crozier & part of<br>"A" Division                 |
| "B"     "      | 2        | 42  |        |        | Including Asst.   |
| "C"     "      | 2        | 40  |        |        | Comm'r. and Asst.                                       |
| "F"     "      | 5        | 43  |        |        | Surgeon   |
| Swan River     | 6        | 32  | 36     | 36     | Sub. Insprs. Shurtliff,<br>Frechette &<br>Q. M. Nicolle |
| "E" Division   |          |     |        |        |   |
| Ft. Qu'Appelle | —        | —   | 3      | —      |   |
| Ft. Ellice     | —        | 6   | 3      | 10     |   |
| Wood Mountain  | —        | 2   | 6      | 1      |   |
| Ontario        | —        | 2   | —      | —      | Staff Const. Fortescue<br>and Const. Fletcher           |
| Manitoba       |          |     |        |        |   |
| Winnipeg       | 3        | 12  | 10     | —      | Commissioner, Pay-<br>master and Adjutant               |
| Dufferin       | 5        | 55  | 77     | 184    | "D" Division  |
| Lower Fort     | —        | —   | 7      | —      |   |
| Govt. Depot    | —        | —   | 5      | —      |   |
|                | 26       | 269 | 273    | 347    |   |

Winnipeg, Man.  
5th February, 1875.

(Sgd) *G. A. French*  
Commissioner, N.W.M.P.

APPENDIX III  
REPORT OF VETERINARY SURGEON J. L. POETT

Swan River Barracks,  
12th November, 1875.

Sir,

I have the honor most respectfully to report for the information of the Minister of Justice, that the general health of the horses of the Headquarters Divisions of the North-West Mounted Police during the remaining part of last winter, this spring, and during the earlier part of the summer has been good, but during the latter part of the summer and fall, the percentage of sickness and of weak and debilitated horses has been extraordinarily great amongst so few a number of horses as have been in this command.

Foul in the Foot or Paronchia Bovum made its appearance on some of the cattle whilst upon the march from Winnipeg to Swan River Barracks. They were immediately placed under a course of Veterinary treatment, and eventually they all recovered.

Upon the arrival of "D" Division at Fort Pelly last summer, I was informed that a herd of horses belonging to the Hudson Bay Company were afflicted with a disease called, in the language of the country, Foot-rot. Shortly after our arrival at Swan River, some of the horses of the Force were attacked with this disease, which I found to be infectious. The technical name of this disease is Carabuncle of the Coronary Ligaments by ulceration taking place in part or parts of this white elastic ligament uniting Hair to Hoof and in some instances complete separation of the Hook takes place, but in the cases which broke out at this Station different parts of the Coronary Ligament became ulcerated, the Ulcers varying in size and sloughing of the borders of the Ulcers taking place by confluence constitute a most formidable and unhealthy wound. Several new cases broke out while in Camp at Fort Carlton, and upon the first Detachment of the Force leaving Carlton en route to Swan River, several of the horses became affected with the disease.

Those of the horses that were only slightly attacked were taken on to Swan River Barracks and two of the worst cases were left in charge of one of the Officers of the Hudson Bay Company at Touchwood Hills, where they were seen and treated by me, on my way from Carlton to Swan River with the second Detachment. I also brought a few cases in with me. I placed them all under treatment and with two exceptions they have all recovered, altho' it took some time to effect a cure owing to the amount of tissue involved and the alarming spread of the Ulcers.

I have observed that both poor and good conditioned horses have alike been attacked.

The cause of the disease is to be attributed to inflammation of the Coronary substance from the fact of some morbid material being present in the blood.

From information which I have been enabled to glean this disease has not affected the horses in this part of the North-West Territories only, but it has been prevalent among some of the horses of this Force at Fort MacLeod and Edmonton.

The pasture around Swan River Barracks is good. The Stables, as far as the actual frame-work is concerned, are well constructed, and with certain additions and alterations can be made warm and comfortable for horses in winter, and light and airy for horses, if required to be stabled in Summer.



The Stalls are altogether too short and too narrow. I would respectfully suggest that swinging bails be put up in each Stall instead of the wooden Sidings at present there, and also that the wooden Mangers in front of each Stall be removed and wooden rails or iron hay racks be substituted. This would lengthen the Stalls considerably, as well as be a means of economizing much hay. I would also respectfully suggest that zinc lined feed boxes be put up in each Stall.

The ventilation of the Stables being at present, very imperfect, I would respectfully suggest that two shaft ventilators be put up, one in each Stable for the purpose of allowing the free egress of impure air. It is also very necessary to have two apertures made at each side of the Stable doors for the purpose of allowing the free ingress of pure air.

No proper means of surface drainage can as yet be attempted owing to the manner in which the Stables are now constructed.

The old method of boring holes in the stable floor and allowing the urine to run underneath, is, in my humble opinion, a most injudicious plan, more especially where large numbers of horses are congregated together, and in course of time, more especially in hot weather, would be found most prejudicial to the health of the horses. In view of this fact, I would respectfully suggest that, if alterations in the Stables are contemplated, surface drains extending from one end of the Stables to the other be made, and also, that a main sewer be put underneath the Stable where all urinary deposits and other effete material could be carried off wherever it may be deemed advisable to carry the drain to.

No blacksmiths' shop has, as yet, been built, all shoeing having been done at the forge cart while the weather permitted, and of late, in the Blacksmiths' Shop belonging to the Department of Works. (Since writing this Report, one of the Stores has been converted into a Blacksmiths' Shop).

I would beg leave respectfully to suggest that the horses of this Force whilst employed for riding purposes receive no less than 10 lbs of Oats, per diem, and those employed for draught purposes, no less than 12 lbs of Oats per Diem, as experience shews that Canadian horses will not stand the work of marching several hundred miles unless they receive a more liberal allowance of grain daily. For instance, the march of Major-General Escort and part of "D" and "E" Divisions to Fort Carlton, a distance of 280 miles from Swan River Barracks, was accomplished in the short space of 8½ days, and upon the arrival of the horses in Carlton they were in good condition; this was entirely owing to the fact of their having been rested and fed upon grain at Swan River for some time previous to their having to proceed on the march, but as soon as the Oats were taken away from the horses, which was the case at Fort Carlton, they signally failed in condition notwithstanding their being daily turned out to feed upon good pasture, and their also having been rested at the above named place for several days. Some Barley was purchased for the horses but they derived little or no benefit therefrom.

Most of the horses which left Swan River Barracks this Summer upon different Detachment services were young remount horses lately arrived from Canada, and the long and rapid marches which they have made, and the insufficiency of grain allowed them, has had a most telling effect upon their condition.

I would respectfully suggest that remount horses upon their arrival from Canada should not be allowed to march such distances as they have had to do last summer, but should be allowed sufficient time to recoup and get into condition, and also that horses which are purchased and intended

for Troopers, be not employed for teaming purposes as was the case during last summer.

The distances travelled by the remount horses this summer are as follows:-

From Winnipeg to Swan River 320 miles  
From Swan River to Ft. Carlton 280 miles  
From Ft. Carlton to Qu'Appelle 210 miles  
From Qu'Appelle to Swan River 120 miles

This does not include the distance travelled by horses which have by order of the Commissioner been obliged to proceed to Shoal Lake, Fort Ellice, two trips to Winnipeg and back, and also very lately to Palestine. The continual marches have a most baneful effect upon the condition of the horses generally, for they have, absolutely, no rest, and if the march has to be done in the month of September or October and even in November, which has been the case with some of our horses, what with the non-nutritious quality of the grass which is generally frozen and burnt and the exceeding coldness, of the nights, can it be wondered why horses should be in such a state of condition as they were this fall and again no sooner had the horses arrived at Swan River Barracks than they had to march to Fort Carlton, and the consequence was that the horses ran down so much in condition that even now at this advanced season of the year they are only in very average condition, and I have also to state that upon the different Detachments arriving from off the march at Swan River Barracks, a great many horses were admitted into the Infirmary Stables, hide bound and completely "played out", an expression synonymous with General Debility. Others again have been admitted staggering into the barracks in a complete state of emaciation.

I would most respectfully suggest that with a view to the better preservation of the health of the horses, that certain numbers be told off for riding purposes, and others for draught purposes of sufficient height and weight. Each man could then have his own horse and I have no hesitation in saying that more interest would be taken by the men of their horses. If this suggestion meets with the approbation of the authorities, I am satisfied that it will be a great step towards materially diminishing the number of sick horses in the Force.

I would here beg leave to make a few remarks in connection with the saddlery of the Force.

In the first place it is greatly to be desired in all mounted Corps that the horses should be fitted with as light and durable a saddle as can possibly be obtained; at the same time whilst upon the horse's back it should be so adjusted and so constructed that no undue or uneven pressure should be put upon the withers of a horse or the centre of his back, for the reason that if the saddle does not fit evenly upon the horse's back, saddle galls and fistula of the withers with all their attendant inconveniences and troubles, will for a certainty ensue.

The saddle now in use by the North-West Mounted Police is very good in many respects, because if this saddle is properly put on and they are in a good state of repair, horses will very seldom have sore backs; another feature in this saddle is its very high pommel, which allows a free current of air to pass beneath the saddle, the striking absence of sore backs, both upon this, and last year's march, is, in my opinion to be attributed to the high pommel, and to the manner in which ventilation can take place while the saddle is upon the horse's back.

The present saddle when equipped in complete marching order weighs Sixty-five Pounds, but while upon the line of march the Commissioner has always ordered the saddle to be lightened as much as possible.

The pattern Bridle submitted by Colonel Richardson of the Department of Justice is admirably adapted for general use in the Force.

For service upon the Plains the wooden instead of the steel stirrups are far preferable and less dangerous to the rider.

The McLellan and Californian saddles have many disadvantages which I have had a good opportunity of observing. I have both seen and treated injuries resulting from the use of these saddles of a most alarming character and in my humble opinion they are apt producers of that much dreaded disease in all mounted Corps, viz; Fistula of the Withers. One of the principal disadvantages of the McLellan Saddle is the amount of Blanket which must be placed underneath the Saddle, to prevent the flat shoulders of the saddle-tree from pressing into the horse's shoulders, and the generality of the McLellan Saddles, at least of those which I have seen, are very narrow in the seat, and again, no matter how well the blanket or saddle cloth be put on, little or no ventilation can take place underneath the saddle, and as for comfort to the rider, there is no comparison between this saddle and the one now in use by the Force.

The old pattern cavalry saddle is also very good it being lighter by one or two pounds than the Universal pattern saddle.

There is one other article of horse equipment which has hitherto been discarded in this Force, and that is the Black Sheepskin, which in my opinion is a most useful article, from the fact that when it is upon the saddle it comes well over the horse's loins and it also keeps the ends of both cloak and cape well together when rolled upon the saddle, and likewise gives to both horse and rider a smart appearance. Considering these facts I am of opinion that it is a very necessary adjunct to a man's horse appointments in this Force, especially when equipped in complete marching order.

Much unnecessary trouble, disease and inconvenience has arisen from not having a proper pattern hobble for the use of the horses of this Force. I would respectfully suggest that American Steel handcuff hobbles, padded and stuffed, be adopted, and that the locks and keys of each pair of hobbles be of the same pattern. This pattern hobble is known to be the only effectual hobble to prevent horses being stampeded by Indians.

I beg leave respectfully to request that I may be allowed a good serviceable Veterinary Surgeon's Field Waggon, for the purpose of conveying veterinary stores, implements, and the regimental medicine chests as I find that it is absolutely necessary for the proper performance of my duties upon the march.

Before closing this Report I would beg leave respectfully to state that the horses which have died at Swan River Barracks this summer and fall are animals who have run down so fearfully in condition and have been so emaciated, that treatment was found to be of very little benefit to them, as the post-mortem examinations only too plainly revealed.

One case of Glanders made its appearance and the horse was immediately shot. Another case of Typhoid Glanders made its appearance in one of the horses belonging to the Board of Works in a very acute form and died.

I sincerely trust that some better arrangements will be made towards having the horses more liberally fed while upon the march and also that shorter daily marches will be made by our horses than has hitherto been



the case, and I am of the opinion that if the authorities deem fit to adopt my humble suggestions, many valuable horses will be saved to the Government which would otherwise be lost from the causes already mentioned in this Report. The horses belonging to the Department of Public Works are fed upon 17 lbs of Oats per diem, the consequence is they very seldom lose a horse, and their horses are always in fine working condition.

The horses of this Force now stationed at Swan River Barracks are only receiving six pounds of Oats daily which is altogether insufficient to get horses into condition who have previously run down so much in flesh.

The grass indigenous to this country has not the nourishment of the Canadian grass therefore it is essentially necessary that to compensate its defect of nutriment, that Canadian horses should receive a larger quantity of Oats in this country than is generally given them in Canada.

After very careful observation I am of opinion that owing to the severity of the climate, the process of digestion in the lower animals becomes more active than in milder climates, consequently proper attention should be directed to this most important point in rating the allowances of grain daily to horses whilst upon the march or in quarters.

I feel that it would have been a dereliction of duty on my part, had I not as Veterinary Surgeon of this Force pointed out some preventative measures as a means of decreasing the sickness amongst the horses of this Force.

I have the honor to be,  
Sir,  
Your most obedient servant,  
*J. L. Poett*  
Vety. Surgeon,  
N.W.M.P.

*Forwarded:-*

*I do not concur with the V.S. regarding the pattern of bridle submitted by Lt. Col. Richardson.*

*Our experience is entirely against snaps which do not allow of fitting the bits properly in the horse's mouths; the breaking of the spring frequently letting the bit out of the horse's mouth altogether.*

*The Pelham bits are almost invariably too light; I suppose fully 50 per cent of them are broken.*

*Although prejudiced in favor of this style of Head Collar and Bit, I must now give my candid opinion in favor of the Regulation Bridle and Head-Stall as used in the Imperial Service and Militia of Canada and trust that none other be supplied for the future.*

*G. A. French.*  
*Commr.*

Lt Colonel G. A. French,  
Commissioner,  
N.W.M.P.

23/12/75



APPENDIX IV  
REPORT OF SURGEON JOHN KITTSON

Lt. Col. French,  
Commissioner  
N.W.M.P.

Swan River,  
19th December 1875.

Sir, I have the honor to report to you for the information of the Department of Justice, that on receiving the appointment of Surgeon to the North-West Mounted Police Force, with orders from the Deputy Minister of Justice to report myself to you at Montreal, I started immediately for that City where I met you on the 14th of April, 1874.

After examining some Recruits in Montreal and Quebec, I proceeded to Toronto take charge of the Medical Department of the Force. The three Troops "D" "E" and "F" were then about formed, and during the succeeding six weeks which preceded our departure for the North-West we took on some more men to fill up vacancies existing in the three original Troops stationed in Manitoba. Numerous able-bodied and well recommended men applied for admission into the Force, and there was no excuse for taking on any one unfit to undergo the may-be hardships of our proposed march through an unknown country.

During this process of Organization there was very little sickness among the men at the New Fort.

I took particular pains to make myself thoroughly acquainted with the Physical and Sanitary condition of the men that were enrolled before I joined, and I am happy to state that very few did not come up to the standard of *physique* and intelligence required for the service this Force was intended to perform. These few were invalided, four in number, as follows:

- 1st. Dislocation of the shoulder joint of two years standing. The deformity produced by the dropping of the shoulder point was evident even to an un-professional eye. The admission of this case reflected very little credit on the honesty or professional capacity of the Medical Examiner.
- 2nd. Phagedenic chancere.
- 3rd. Constitutional Syphilis with suppurating Buboës; admitted into the Force while suffering from the Disease.
- 4th. Phthisis and Supra-orbital Neuralgia (chronic). This man joined by the advice of the Medical Examiner who informed him that Manitoba was "a famous country for weak lungs", a very reliable way to get rid of a patient.

We left Toronto on the 6th June and until we reached Fargo only two cases of illness called for Medical attention, a case of Erysipilas, and Sub-Constable Onzman who for the first time shewed symptoms of Epileptic Fits marked by anomalous brain symptoms, which eventually led to his being discharged. During the transport the men conducted themselves well. Their neat appearance, sobriety and high spirits were subjects of universal admiration wheresoever we passed. The fact that not one deserted while south of the line speaks favorably of the Men's good faith in joining.

When at Fargo with the unloading, unpacking and repacking of the Stores, we had a good opportunity of judging the *material* constituting our Force which with their apparent determination to put their "shoulder to the wheel" inspired faith in the future success of our undertaking.

During the short trip from Fargo to Dufferin, Diarrhoea made its appearance in the Troops. Some of the men were very ill but it lasted

only a few days. It was not, however, without much anxiety that I saw this enemy of the Prairie Traveller make an appearance in our Camp at so early a date; but a more terrible enemy, viz: Typhoid Fever, awaited us. Soon after our arrival at Dufferin, Sub-Con. McIntosh fell ill with all the symptoms of this fell disease; for two weeks I despaired of his recovery; on the third week he rallied, and when we left I considered him out of danger and on the way to rapid recovery. It seems he had a relapse of the Fever and later we heard of his death with sorrow. Before we were on the road in earnest, three other cases declared themselves, one of which, Sub-Con. Brown, also died. By Isolation and strict attention to hygienic principles the disease was prevented from spreading. It was at a critical moment; had the disease spread, there is no knowing the amount of demoralization it might have caused, not to mention the possibility of completely checking the Expedition. It was the beginning of an Epidemic which involved the whole of Manitoba and surrounding Territory. The four cases mentioned above were left at Dufferin with suitable attendants under the charge of Capt. Clark. The United States Army Surgeon of Pembina Fort visited them daily and gave them all the medical attention required. An excellent Lady (Mrs. Olman), braving all dangers, administered to their wants personally, and every day added to their comfort by many acts of kindness which only the tender heart of Woman can suggest to her willing hands.

The terrible Stampede on the night of the 20th of June might have added seriously to our chapter of accidents. The complete blackness of the night made more bewildering at intervals by forked lightning, the moaning of the wind, and then that thundering unearthly noise, the clattering of one thousand hoofs carrying the terrified animals like a living tidal wave towards us; all this will ever remain vivid in the memory of those who were present.

As the 250 horses rushed on every side of us it is surprising that only one man was anything like seriously injured. Sub. Con. Latimer, being on Picket, was run over receiving a Scalp wound. The Scalp was cut across nearly from Ear to Ear and somewhat drawn over the frontal bone. It was immediately stitched, and healed kindly. Besides the four cases of Fever, other sick men were left at Dufferin.

- 1 Case of Sciatica
- 1 Case of Debility
- 1 Case of Orchitis
- 1 Case of Anthritis
- 1 Case of Symptoms not defined.

The Force struck the Dufferin Camp early in the afternoon of July 7th all in good spirits and anticipation of what the future had for us. Diarrhoea gave us some trouble but not to any marked degree till we reached La Roche Percee. I observed that Diarrhoea was always on the increase immediately after the consumption of Fresh Meat. The better class of Half-Breeds will not eat the Meat of worked or travelled animals; they say the flesh is poisoned. Our experience would lead to the same conclusion, but there is no doubt that the sudden change from salt meat to fresh meat has some weight in explaining the cause of the "Prairie Cholera". Half-Breeds are not subject to the malady, their food being the same when hunting as when at home, consisting of jerked meat, Pemmican and Marrow fat.

Opium, always the principal ingredient of anti-diarrhoea mixtures elsewhere, was of secondary importance with us, enormous and repeated doses being taken in same case without the least benefit. In this country the system has a toleration for Opium having to be prescribed in nearly double doses when its effects are required. Opium having failed us, I was at first

very much puzzled what to do, but remembering the use of Ipecac during the Crimean War for dysentery led to its trial with more success; given on an empty stomach after a few hours privation from food and liquids, the dose of 20 to 30 grains acts like a specific, especially in dysentery. If necessary the dose may be repeated in 7-8 hours. Thus administered the Stomach usually bears it well, enjoying rest. The remedy, however, which has given most satisfaction in the treatment of Diarrhoea is the "Trinitrate of Bismuth", not in the small dose prescribed in *Materia Medica* works of 5-10 grains, but 20-30 grains, each dose accompanied with one grain of Opium powder. It has never failed in my hands and I gladly recommend it to all Prairie Travellers. For Cholera Infantum there is no remedy equal to it. I usually administer a dose after each motion of the Bowels. Of course in the treatment of this malady we have to attend to the diet, which however is not severe:- to eat whatever the Quartermaster can supply only avoiding liquids. Counter irritants (Mustard) are also applied to the pit of the Stomach if Colic and vomiting be in the chain of symptoms.

The Mosquitoes now and then made a raid on the Force and caused much annoyance; the sting of the smaller species is the most painful and irritating. The free application of Liquid Ammonia diluted in ten parts of water gave immediate and generally permanent relief. As a preventive Oil of Juniper was of some use.

The dust (impalpable particles of coal from the burnt Prairie Grass) which rose like a cloud along the line of march brought on several cases of sore eyes and troublesome catarrh by mechanical irritation on the Mucous Membranes of the Eyes and Nose. This dust also caused a burning sensation of the skin, especially of the neck and face, relieved only by the free use of cold water; the lips became very sore and set at defiance all the recipes for lip salves in the prescription Book. Lunar Caustic freely applied was a specific.

At Roche Percee we took advantage of Inspr. Jarvis' Detachment going to Edmonton by way of Fort Ellice to send a few sick and disabled men.

- 1 Case of Phthisis.
- 1 Case of Prostatic Abscess operated on successfully before leaving.
- 1 Case of Sprained Ankle.
- 2 Cases of Debility from Diarrhoea.

We struck the Roche Percee Camp on the 29th July and camped 9 miles off at Wood End Depot - ominous name, being the extreme limits West of the Woodlands as far as Bow river. From this point it was only a repetition of what has already been stated - Diarrhoea and its debilitating effects, except that Typhoid Fever again broke out in two cases but of a mild type, and with the same attention to isolation and Hygiene observed at Dufferin was prevented from spreading. These two men were convalescent by the time we reached Old Wife's Creek on the 12th August.

The second of August was noted for producing the longest Sick Report of any one day throughout the March, numbering in all Twenty-Two sick, principally Diarrhoea and Dysentery; only five were unfit for any duty, 9 were put on "light duty" and the remaining eight "Medicine and Duty".

Reaching Lac Leveille on the 8th August we had intended to rest there a few days but owing to the water being impregnated with "Alkali" it was impossible to remain there any length of time without serious injury to man and beast so we pushed on to better parts. As far as I had the means of analysing I made out Sodium Sulphate to be the principal ingredient, also called Glouben's Salts, a well known purgative. There are also other



salts present, possibly the Sodides. The water of this Lake is not impregnated to the point of saturation with these salts but some neighbouring small lakes are, and a few even to the point of being semi-solid; when bathing in Lac Laveille there is a feeling of buoyancy from the greater density of its water compared with ordinary water, and it gives the skin a soapy feeling, but the use of soaps gives it all the characteristics of hard water. The reason that all the Lakes of the Prairie are more or less Saline is due to the fact that they have no outlet, consequently the soluble salts permeating the surrounding country are dissolved by each successive rainfall and thus brought to the nearest inland Sea. This accumulation then must be an increasing factor year by year and we have this fact well demonstrated by Shoal Lake; this body of water is certainly more saline this year than it was last year. It is my intention to make an annual analysis of all the Lakes and Streams of localities stationed by our Force and keep a register of the same to Report. To effect this purpose I have included a New Chemical Reagents and necessary Apparatus in the estimate of Drugs for 1876 and 1877.

At Old Wife's Creek it was thought necessary to form a "Cripple Camp". We were soon to enter an unknown country, uninhabited by the (for all we knew), hostile Blackfeet, and the Sick, the Convalescent and the Weak would have been unnecessary encumbrance.

The following cases were left in charge of Constable Sutherland:

- 1st Orchitis from Gonorrhoea.
- 2nd Variocoele.
- 3rd Typhoid Fever - Convalescent.
- 4th Typhoid Fever - Convalescent.
- 5th Continued Fever.
- 6th Debility from Diarrhoea.
- 7th Whitlow.

I would here respectfully state that the three cases of Fever mentioned above did unexceptionally well, the fever in each case taking its natural course without any complication whatever. There is no doubt that all contagious fevers have less chance to grapple with their victims than when these are confined within four walls, and so long as the temperature keeps above 30 degrees there need be no apprehension of danger from cold, etc. As the temperature goes down it only requires another blanket or two. Should fever break out at this Post during the summer I would not hesitate to leave a Hospital Tent pitched to place my patients and thus effect two good purposes - Isolation and direct benefit to the Sick. On the Prairies during the summer months the nights are cool, often actually cold, not in the least influenced by any degree of heat of the preceding day. As an example on the 26th of July the Maximum then registered 87 degrees and the Minimum 28 degrees shewing a range of 59 degrees and yet without any perceptible evil influence over the general health of the Force; one had only to wake up and put an extra coat or so over his shoulders.

Before leaving "Cripple Camp" I held a Sick Parade at an Indian Camp not far from our own, the details of which may not prove uninteresting. They were Indians of the Sioux Tribe and the Camp consisted of about 9 men and 7 women besides several children. The Chief consulted their Pa-ge-we-chas-ta (Medicine Man, or more correctly Herb Man) and came to the conclusion that they would allow the pale-faced Medicine Man to treat their sick, and a good proportion of the whole number was immediately paraded in the Chief's capacious Lodge - three men and five women. The men were affected as follows:- One case of Pannus (Blooded Eye),



nearly blind. One case Sciatica of seven years standing (effects of a fall) and one case of Shaking Palsy (Paralysis Agitans). These were not encouraging, and the women less so. Two cases of confirmed Dyspepsia and three cases of Phthisis. As we were several days preparing the "Cripple Camp" and resting the horses for a final and determined push, I had ample occasion to exhaust the Medical Science on these poor unfortunates, but to no purpose. With one exception they all gave up my Prescriptions after a few trials. This exception was the case of Sciatica; he was blistered, cauterized, injected hypodermically; he seemed to delight in the agony, but to no purpose, and I fear the reputation of the pale-faced Medicine Man to be at low ebb among the Sooty Sons of the Plains. That such diseases as Consumption and Dyspepsia should be common among the Indian Women did not surprise me, two diseases which, *par excellence*, follow in the wake of want, hardship and exposure. The cruelty they have to bear at the hands of their Lords and Masters is incredible. Pope must have had them before his mind's eye when he wrote the lines:

*"Fixed like a Plant on his peculiar spot  
to draw nutrition, propagate and rot".*

I was repaid by getting lively specimens of their "blood purifiers", a great nuisance to the Prairie wanderer and against catching them it is useless to guard one's self. They lie dormant on Camp grounds, long deserted, and brought to lively and tormenting activity by coming in contact with a warm body. We got rid of the few we caught in this place by the free application of Mercurial Ointment. From this date only a few cases require chronicling. Diarrhoea was still a source of trouble but never to an alarming extent and always gave away to treatment.

On the 6th September a case of Idiopathic Lockjaw was added to the Sick Report and resisted all treatment till we reached Sweet Grass Hills (Trois Buttes), and a few days later Sub. Con. Wilkins had an attack of Congestion of the Lungs; he was refused by me when he presented himself for admission into the Force at Toronto as having Heart Disease, but by some influence he was taken on. A finer specimen of the human form could not exist, and endowed with a strength beyond the common, but when the hardships of the Force became very severe he gave way completely and at his own request he was invalided at Sweet Grass Hills; he wished to find some of his friends that lived somewhere in Montana. By this time he was a perfect wreck of his former self.

The men now being obliged to walk a great part of the time suffered much from sore feet and when they received a supply of Moccasins from Benton it was a boon beyond the worth of money.

At Sweet Grass Hills by bad luck we camped for a couple of days on an old Indian Camping Ground, called by the men "Dead Horse Valley", Here the men became infested with vermin, the Officers being no exception. In three or four days it was appalling and their blood purifying nature was brought to bear on us in a way that was annoying as it was disgusting; mere washing and changing the underclothing did not answer and we were completely out of Mercurial Ointment or any other preparation of Mercury that could answer the same purpose. We had five gallons of Oil of Juniper, brought to fight against the Mosquitoes, and knowing that it formed a principal ingredient of a French prescription for "Scabies" (Itch), which is a disease caused by a microscopic insect, I was induced to use it. Every man was paraded and undressed and well rubbed with the oil; the clothes and blankets were next sprinkled with the same; not an article that could harbor this pest remained unsprinkled. The experiment was successful. The

Lice (both *Pedulus Capitis* and *Pediculus Corporis*) disappeared as if by magic, and I do not remember that the men were ever troubled again to any degree by this loathsome insect.

We were now on the homeward march, returning by the White Mud River. The weather kept beautiful and only comfortably warm. The men were in high spirits and although they were certain that there was no more danger to apprehend from an enemy in human form still they were aware of the fact that men had lost their lives by Snow Storms in this very vicinity at earlier dates than this, the 21st of September.

Our horses were mere walking skeletons and only required a Snow Storm, as the Commissioner appropriately remarked in his Report, to kill all our horses and leave us helpless on the prairies without either wood or shelter. I mention this only to show that we have a class of men who are ready at all times to meet adverse circumstances of a most discouraging nature, and face danger without flinching when called upon to do so by necessity.

It was a beautiful sight at night after a fatiguing march to walk about the Camp and see the men making merry around the Camp fires. Their feet were not so weary that they could not dance to some merry tune of a flute and the roll of a drum made out of a cheese box - the only instruments representing the N.W.M.P. Band. Some splendid voice would charm us with some touching songs, songs of Home, songs of the Heart; and the sounds of "Lights Out" would mingle with the last notes of "Home Sweet Home". Such was the moral condition of the men as we turned our faces eastward after having made half of the longest and most trying march recorded in the annals of History, and this state of mind was not without its reflex and beneficial influence on the *physique*.

The march back to Winnipeg was not less trying and certainly more disagreeable towards the end. Winter with all its disadvantages had settled when we were still Three Hundred miles from our destination, and yet the two returning Troops, "D" and "E", remained so healthy that I have not one case of sickness to record if I may except the writer. When at Fort Ellice I was called to visit a case of Typhoid Fever and a few days later symptoms of this Fever shewed themselves in me. My long illness was the reason why this Report was not brought to your notice before. During our absence Typhoid Fever had spread over the whole Province of Manitoba, and even insinuated itself in the Territory. Our two Comrades that died at Dufferin and mentioned in the first part of this Report were the first of many victims of the epidemic.

"D" Troop and Staff arrived at Winnipeg the 7th of November; notwithstanding the severity of the weather during the latter part of our march the men were in remarkably fine condition, I left for Dufferin with the one but last Detachment ordered to proceed to that place on the 6th January, 1874, leaving a few sick men in charge of Dr. Codd of the Provisional Battalion. One of these, Sub-Con. Tute, died shortly after, the Post Mortem showing that death must have been caused by a blow on the back part of the head. A few evenings previous to his death he had complained of a sore head from a fall; it was supposed that he had slipped when out in the yard and falling on his head brought on concussion of the Brain.

While at Dufferin during the Winter of 1874 and 1875 there was very little sickness in the Troop and I cannot say that those who were sick suffered from any particular disease more than another except towards the Spring the Troop got pretty well inoculated with Syphilis and several cases of Gonorrhoea. Being imported from Winnipeg about that time, it

was not long before a good number of our men were infected with the disease. These two diseases, Gonorrhoea and Syphilis, increased the Daily Sick Report notably. It was impossible to take any means to prevent their spreading.

On the 17th June, 1875, we were again on the march *en route* for Headquarters: before leaving Winnipeg the following men were invalided by a Board composed of Drs. Codd and Kittson, the latter acting as President.

- 1st. Dropsy.
- 2nd. Impaired Hand - amputation of the thumb at the third joint from Caries of the first two and partial of third Phalanges.
- 3rd. Syphilitic Ulcers of the leg.
- 4th. Syphilis (tertiary).
- 5th. Debility.
- 6th. Variocoele.
- 7th. Chronic Ophthalmia.
- 8th. Rupture.
- 9th. Atrophy of the Heart after Typhoid Fever.

On our first setting out from Winnipeg, June 17th, a refractory Sub. Constable was ordered to be tied to the Stirrup of a Rider. The horse taking fright, the man was dragged some distance before it was possible to undo the straps binding his wrists to the Stirrups. The right Clavicle was fractured (simple fracture). The bone was set and union took place in due time. The man was suffering from constitutional Syphilis at the time and is still under treatment for the same. Although the strapping of a refractory man's wrists to the Stirrup of a Rider is authorized by Military practice and established by precedence, I would respectfully suggest that as far it concerns the Mounted Police Force such practice be not allowed.

We reached Swan River Barracks (Pelly), July 7th. I found the general health of "E" Troop men very good, and the verbal report of Dr. Douglas, who was left in Medical charge was satisfactory. From the want of writing material there was no Sick Report kept. Two men were invalided from this Post:-

- 1st. Phthisis.
- 2nd. Debility with Symptoms of Tubercular Deposits.

As I had but little to do with either of these cases I cannot report fully on them. It is useless to look for one chief factor in the cause of any one class of disease, especially in a country where miasma and air impurities from over population do not exist, but that we should look to a combination of multiple causes. The water of this locality, that of a running stream, tho' hard, is very good, every pint containing nine grains of Carbonate of Lime and Sulphate of Lime, the latter making it, "permanently hard" water; its use may predispose to Diarrhoea by being rendered less absorbable but as the effects of hard water on the system still belongs to the debatable sphere of the undecided part of the Medical Science, I refrain from entering into the discussion at present. Later by close observation I may be enabled to offer more decided opinions on the matter. All in all I may say that the country is healthy; in the Fall there was an epidemic of Influenza but when we consider that the Men were still in half finished Barracks and some of the Officers under canvas up to the 22nd of November when the thermometer ranged as low as 20 degrees below Zero, the fact of a slight epidemic of influenza is not surprising. So soon as the Men moved into the finished Barracks, the Sick List diminished from sixteen to four.

We have at this present moment five patients in Hospital; three of these will be invalided so soon as their removal becomes practicable:-



1st. Phtisis.

2nd. Phtisis.

3rd. Spasmodic Action of the Abdominal Aorta, a rare disease often confounded with Abdominal Annurism, except that on auscultation there is no bruit, the propulsion felt on pressure is the same as in Annurism even more pronounced.

The cases of Annurism reported occasionally as "Cured" by benighted would be famous Doctors are sufferers from this disease; Abdominal or Thoracic Annurism is incurable. Spasmodic and undue action of the Arterial system, especially when confined to the Aorta is curable but requires time, change of scenes, Tonics, etc., In eight years of practice I have met with four cases.

The two cases of Consumption now in Hospital are doing well, especially that of Sub-Constable Chisholm, Haemorrhage of the Lungs, a prominent symptom in this case ceased over four weeks ago; he is gradually gaining flesh and his strength is also on the increase. The other case is also doing well but not so rapidly.

This gives me a chance to write a few words on the climate of this country so much vaunted by the Doctors "out East" for its bracing effects on the lungs and the system generally. As it is a question of much importance and open to many sided views, it is with diffidence that I offer a few remarks on what may influence the future actions of many poor sufferers. To utilize for, and transit to, suffering humanity whatever knowledge a Professional man gathers in the course of his career becomes a sacred duty, however small that knowledge may be. It is by the constant gathering and accumulation of isolated facts that science in all its branches has attained its present grandeur and magnitude. I will offer no theories as to the effects of high or low altitudes and latitudes, but merely report the few cases that have come under my notice since my joining the Force:-

1st. Sub-Con. N . . . About 27 years, family history uncertain, dissipated habits. He was sent to Fort Ellice from Roche Percee during the march of 1874. Two cavities in left lung, spitting of blood, night sweats, emaciation and loss of strength. *Treatment*, Tonics combined with Alternatives, nutritious diet, "Off Duty", i.e. no fatiguing work, regular exercise and early hours, to live in the open air as much as possible, i.e. Tent Life (this was in Summer). Result cured, with the exception of a slight flattening of the left Chest the general form is good, strength completely recovered.

2nd. Sub-Con. C . . . Age 30. Family History good; good habits; *good physique* but not healthy, began spitting blood early last fall, found tubercular deposits on examination, night sweats, loss of flesh and strength. *Treatment*, same as above, has gained flesh, gradual recovery of strength, evidence of complete recovery.

3rd. Sub. Con. D . . . Age 28 (French), family history bad, rather dissipated habits, was through the "Franco-Prussian War", delicate appearance but fine *physique* and full chest. Began by spitting blood, Night Sweats, *ralls* at upper left Chest, loss of flesh and strength. Treatment same as above, in Hospital (Hospital Ward, large, roomy and well aired), out door exercise in fine weather, even in severe cold weather so long as not windy. Result: Night sweats checked, spitting of blood almost nil, somewhat stronger and in better spirits. I am doubtful somewhat as to the ultimate result of this case. The Family history is very bad, both parents having died Consumptives but the results so far are favorable and speak well for the country. I need only add that the Treatment followed in each case is the same as that prescribed in other countries but with better results. The average percentage



of humidity from observations taken since is 62. Latitude 51°54'31" North, probable altitude 1700 feet above the Sea.

I would respectfully state that the Rations furnished by Government are unexceptionally good. No one article of food can give reason for complaint. On two occasions it was found necessary to increase the rations of Meat from the one and a half to two pounds, when we got a plentiful supply of Buffalo west of Cypress Hills; the march was severe and the men required more food which was willingly granted, and this Fall when the men were obliged to do heavy fatigue work it was found necessary again to increase the rations of Meat and accordingly recommended and ordered to be issued. I would respectfully suggest that under similar circumstances the ration of Tea be increased when on the march or doing heavy service of whatever nature. There seems to be a natural craving for Tea. Tea is now acknowledged not to be a delicacy only whose stimulating effects are transient, but a *food* of no mean value, and having an effect on the nervous system which should class it among the nervine Tonics. On the march the men constantly grumble as to the insufficiency of Tea and never when in Barracks and performing only the ordinary duties of the Force. Respectfully submitting the above considerations I would suggest that the ration of Tea be increased from half to three quarters of an ounce when on the march or doing heavy fatigue work.

A word about the clothing. The underclothing furnished is of superior quality, well made and warm. The Grey Breeches answer the purposes of the Force better than the Trousers; those do very well for parade. The Scarlet Norfolk Jacket altho' made of superior quality of cloth are faulty in shape. It is my humble opinion that the Tunic would be more comfortable, better fit, more seemly in appearance and warmer in cold weather. The Jacket when once it gets wet draws in every direction; the belt, which is a fixture, is drawn towards the arm-pits and thus allows cool air, dust, etc. a free entrance between it and the Breeches or Trousers. The Buttons being placed far apart have a "draw" game with their fellow button-holes and give a scolloped appearance to the front. Altogether I believe the Norfolk Jacket to be a failure and would humbly suggest that it be substituted by the Tunic. The Cloak and Cape are also of good material but certainly do not answer the purpose for which they are intended; they are not warm enough for Winter use and *not* being waterproof I cannot see their use for Summer. They answer very well for cold evenings in summer. I believe that a Skin Coat with the Fur on as Buffalo Robe or Sheep Skin (White) made so as to cover the hips only, to be by far a more suitable covering than the present Cloak - lighter, warmer, cheaper and certainly more durable. A Sheepskin Coat will last six or seven years with pretty severe usage; this I know from experience.

A light waterproof may be furnished for summer use.

As there is a possibility that this Force may be increased and it being of the highest importance that men chosen for this service should be of a physique and sanitary condition beyond criticism I would respectfully recommend that the Honorable Minister of Justice draw the attention of whatever Medical Examiner be appointed to the "causes of refusal" as set down in the Regulations for the admission of candidates to the Kingston Military College, as they are very carefully drawn out. I insert them here with a few remarks:-

"1st. Feeble constitution, unsound health from what ever cause, indications of former disease, as leech bites, traces of Blisters and Nodes, Glandular Swellings or other Symptoms of Scrofula". I would add Cicatrices about

the Groins and other signs of Constitutional Syphilis. Syphilis as a distinct disease has caused us more troubles, vexation and loss of time than any other one disease, not to mention that other diseases are exaggerated by the presence of this virus in the system.

"2nd. Chronic Cutaneous affections especially of the Scalp.

"3rd. Severe injuries of the Bones of the Head.

"4th. Impaired Vision from whatever cause.

"Inflammatory affections of the Eyelids, immobility of the Iris, fistula la chrymalis, etc.,"

I would strongly advise the use of the Opthal miscope to detect any disease of the eyes not apparent externally, and Gaegens or Snellings Test Type to ascertain the power of vision.

"5th. Deafness, copious discharge from the Ears.

"6th. Impediment of the Speech.

"7th. Want of *due capacity* of the Chest or any other indication of a liability to pulmonic disease".

Here I would respectfully state that *capacity* as ascertained by the usual measurement of the circumference of the Chest, the so-called "Military Measurement" the arms being extended horizontally, laterally does not give the true capacity of the Chest. It would perhaps be better to change the word "capacity" for that of elasticity, at the same time keeping in mind a certain number of inches as a standard for the circumference of the Chest allowing for variation of height. What I mean by *elasticity* is the difference in inches between the mean circumference after the complete act of expiration and the maximum circumference after a full inspiratory act bringing the action of the elevator muscles of the Chest to bear on the ribs. It is easily seen that by this means the real capacity quantitatively speaking can be easily ascertained. My experience has lead me to the conclusion that it is not the biggest man that has the greatest elasticity but the middle-sized wiry and active man. In the Force we have a man over six feet in height and large in proportion whose elasticity is only two inches, the circumference of his Chest being 42 inches; he suffers from Chronic Bronchitis. We have another man Five feet nine and a half inches in height weighing 160 lbs whose Chest capacity is six inches within a fraction. I have set down as my standard *three inches*, and anything less than that should be considered as suspicious. My remarks on this point may appear lengthy, but the importance of it is a good apology. All those that I have invalided for Chest affection, and those in the Force suffering from the same have demonstrated this to be a fact beyond doubt.

"8th. Impaired or inadequate efficiency of one or both of the superior extremities, from Palsy, Old Fractures (especially of the Clavicle), Contraction of a Joint, Mutilation, Extenuation, Deformity of, Ganglions, etc.

"9th. Unnatural excurvature or incurvature of the Spine.

"10th. Hernia or a tendency to that disability from preternatural enlargement of the abdominal Ring."

The Physician should make a very careful examination of this part of the body and not many know how to do it. The tip of the fore-finger should be thrust along the Spermatic Cord into the External Abdominal Ring and a tightness on the tip of the finger should be felt like that of a string strung on a bow. Should these parts be flabby and the Ring prematurely large they are first excuses for rejection. The old Dragoon may do good service with the help of a truss but would be perfectly useless for the Mounted Police. So far we have had only one case of rupture.

"11th. Varicose state of the veins of the Scrotum and Spermatic Cord (one case of Variocoele was admitted into the Force at Ottawa, he was eternally on the Daily Sick Report until he was invalided). Variocoele, Hydrocele, Haemorrhoids, Fistula inperines, and any other Fistula.

"12th. Impaired or inadequate efficiency of one or both extremities from Varicose Veins, old Fracture, Malformation, as "*Flat Feet*" (Italics mine), Palsy or Lameness, Contraction, Mutilation, Extenuations, Enlargement, Unusual Length, Overlaying or Supernumerary Toes, Ganglions, etc.

"13th. Ulcers or unsound Cicatrices of Ulcers, likely to break out afresh.

"14th. Diseases whether acute or chronic for which Medical treatment is required."

Before closing this Report I would respectfully call to your favorable consideration the services of Hospital Sergeant Price. Having a fair knowledge of Medicine, he, on several occasions was enabled to take my place and performed the duties of Surgeon in a very creditable manner. His conduct towards the Sick has always been marked by kindness and with that strict observance of Order as becomes a soldier.

The whole respectfully submitted.

I have the honour to be,  
Sir,  
Your obedient servant,  
J. Kittson, M. D.

*Forwarded:-*

*It is much to be regretted that this very able and instructing report was not written in time for last year's published report, owing to the illness of Dr. Kittson.*

G. A. French, Commissioner.

*The actual number of cases of each disease treated will be forwarded by next mail.*

G. A. F.

# APPENDIX V

## SUPPLEMENTARY

Report showing Diseases that have appeared on Sick Report of "D" Troop from 1st January, 1875 to 1st January, 1876, and of "E" Troop from 7th July, 1875 to 1st January, 1876.

Swan River, 1st January.  
1876.

| Disease.                                   | No. | Remarks.                                    |
|--|-----|---|
| Aorta, Spasmodic Act-<br>ion of Abdominal. | 1   |   |
| Boils.                                     | 6   |   |
| Bronchitis.                                | 3   |   |
| Catarrh.                                   | 23  |   |
| Contusions (Minor Surgery).                | 26  |   |
| Costalgia. (False Pleurisy.)               | 11  |   |
| Erysipilas                                 | 1   |   |
| Fracture of Ulna.                          | 1   |   |
| Fracture of Clavicle                       | 1   |   |
| Fever, Intermit.                           | 3   |   |
| Gonorrhoea.                                | 9   | and more, some cases<br>not being reported. |
| Gastralgia.                                | 2   |   |
| Gastritis                                  | 2   |   |
| Heart, Disease of the (Atrophy)            | 1   |   |
| Influenza                                  | 13  |   |
| Jaundice                                   | 1   |   |
| Lumbago                                    | 1   |   |
| Neuralgia.                                 | 5   |   |
| Ophthalmia                                 | 1   |   |
| Psoriasis                                  | 1   |   |
| Psoriasis Palmaris                         | 1   |   |
| Phthisis                                   | 5   |   |
| Piles                                      | 3   |   |
| Rheumatism (Muscular)                      | 15  |   |
| Rupia Labialis                             | 1   |   |
| Rupture (Inguinal)                         | 1   |   |
| Syphilis                                   | 14  |   |
| Tonsilitis                                 |     |   |
| Varicose Veins (Leg)                       | 1   | Operated on by Ligature<br>(cured)          |
| Whitlow                                    | 3   |   |

*J. Kittson, M.D.*  
Surgeon  
N.W.M.P.

Forwarded  
G. A. French.  
Commr.



APPENDIX VI  
CONFIDENTIAL REPORT OF MAJOR-GENERAL  
E. SELBY SMYTH

The Honourable  
The Minister of Justice, Canada.

Sir,

With reference to my general report to you dated Nov. 27,\* I have now the honor to submit a few confidential remarks upon subjects which more properly come under your notice in that form:

1. I commence at the head of the Force to whom I should perhaps allude in pursuance of the memorandum enclosed to me in that letter.
2. The Commissioner of the North-West Mounted Police, Lieutenant Colonel French, a captain in the Royal Artillery, was entrusted with the principal details connected with the organization and equipment of the North-West Mounted Police, in the early part of the year 1874, a portion only, about 150 officers and men having been engaged in September of the previous year, and despatched to Manitoba. Lieutenant Colonel French, as I am informed and as the result proved, applied all the intelligence of a cultivated Military Officer, and the result of much experience to effect the object with which he was entrusted.
2. His own published account of the harassing and adventurous march of nearly 1800 miles in the autumn of last year renders it unnecessary for me to do more than casually refer to it.
4. That march proves of itself the singular sagacity with which he safely conducted 300 men and horses with their enormous train of impedimenta with draught oxen from the Red River across the pathless and inhospitable prairies South of the Saskatchewan, along the vast plains of the Souris, and over the great cactus plains beyond the Coteau and South of Cypress Hills, almost to the base of the Rocky Mountains, and after accomplishing the object of this expedition, and, leaving half his force to winter there, and consummate that object, returning with the remainder.
5. The amount of transport for oats alone, independent of provisions which this force required, can hardly be comprehended by those who have not experience in expeditions of this character, and, though want of foresight has been attributed to Lieutenant Colonel French on this special point, I have reason to know that he had from the first calculated on procuring large quantities of supplies from the Boundary Commissioners, which he subsequently obtained; this of course saved his horses from starvation, but he had pre-considered it.
6. In the first instance he had intended to follow the boundary track, and, had he been permitted to do so, he would have been in no want of food for his horses or cattle, but, being diverted from that line, by unavoidable circumstances he was forced to make his way further north by the aid of sextant and compass, over the trackless prairie, devoid for days together of wood and water and frequently of any nourishing grass.
7. The anxiety that must have been endured by an Officer in Command of a newly raised mounted force, taking the field before discipline could have been properly established, unused to horses and unenured to the

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\* Published in the *Report on the State of the Militia of the Dominion of Canada*, in Sessional Papers of Canada, 1875.

toilsome hardships and privations of camp life in such a country can hardly be overestimated.

8. One of the greatest dangers to be encountered in such a case is the stampede of horses; had this occurred in the wilderness of rolling prairie over which he marched the winter snows must have caught his men before he could hope to reach shelter. He returned at length, and has published an interesting account of this eventful and successful expedition. His services to this Dominion have been valuable, his whole desire is concentrated in serving well the Government which employs him, in developing a powerful and useful force, and so far he has been, in my experience of it, very successful.

9. It may not be out of place to mention here that by the American officers in their North-West outpost as well as by the white inhabitants, half-breeds, and Indians, with whom I came in contact, Lieutenant Colonel McLeod is held in very high estimation; he has gained the respect, esteem, and confidence of all classes - and the intimate acquaintance, formed in company with him in 700 miles of my journey has similarly impressed me in his favor, as an officer eminently adapted for the post he occupies.

### **Depot**

10. A depot or training school is necessary at which men on first enrolment should spend 4 or 5 months for study and instruction in the winter, ready to join their troops as efficient men in the opening of the season each year.

11. I think this should be established at some convenient place in Ontario, under the command of an officer who could not only teach drill and discipline, the keeping of books, etc., but also the laws and legal process which the officers in their capacity of Magistrates are expected to carry out. Officers as well as men might attend police courts and gain a general knowledge of police duties.

12. I am inclined to the belief that at present there are not twenty men in the Force who would know how to execute a warrant or subpoena.

13. Officers should have lectures on common law and the powers and duties of Magistrates. Systematical uniformity in drill, keeping of accounts, returns, etc. would be thus obtained, and officers as well as men would upon joining the Force in the West, know their duty, which cannot be thoroughly taught them now, when their time is required for other services.

14. The depot would also sift out the useless men. Many a young man who looks very promising as a recruit breaks down under the strain of real service, the expense of sending forward unfit men would therefore be saved.

15. If a depot were established at Toronto or Kingston where there are barracks and stables, a thorough course of instruction could be imparted. Presuming that 50 men re-engage annually, 50 men would be required to replace those taking their discharge there should be a good drill instructor, and about a dozen horses would be permanently required, though the number of horses might be increased in the winter to send forward as re-mounts in the spring.

16. By engaging men in October, they would be given six or seven months instruction of every necessary kind and be ready for immediate duty on reaching the North-West.

17. All officers and men on appointment should join the depot, which should be annually inspected by a competent officer.

18. It might some times even be desirable to carry men on special duty

in spring wagons, rather than on horseback, but as this would only be exceptional I advise no diminution in the number of horses.

19. The plan of making men act as teamsters as well as troopers cannot be satisfactory in any sort of permanent force; the law has defined the strength of the force to be 300 men, I should otherwise strongly advocate an addition of 6 dismounted men to each troop, and 14 horses expressly and solely for transport, and so leaving the troop of 50 men complete, this would add 36 dismounted men to the force, they should be specially engaged for this service and not required to do police work, except on emergency; these men could be also employed for farming about the posts. I do not think the plan of making the troopers do this sort of work, will ever answer, no matter what interest they are given in the result of their labor; the horses could be used for the field guns also if required. If this were adopted and each post well supplied with rations and forage, a force could at any time move rapidly and effectually at an hour's notice.

20. Should it not be desirable to amend the law, then I think 5 or 6 men per troop, of the present establishment should be engaged for the special services I have mentioned.

21. Five or six heavy wagons and one light spring wagon with each troop would be sufficient. The wagons now in use are excellent, though of narrower gauge than the prairie carts; they should be provided with strong racks round the box, brakes, and whipple-trees.

### **Equipment**

22. Stores of all kinds are liberally supplied, but apparently more experience is required in their selection. The bridles and headstalls are of various patterns, the latter are too weak, composed of single instead of double leather, consequently they frequently break, especially when horses are picketed. I am inclined to think a single bridle rein is sufficient, and a lasso attached to the cheek for picketing. The more equipment is reduced, commensurate with efficiency, the better; the bit is thought too weak for rough work.

23. The present pouch is not approved of, the cartridges are apt to shake out, when the flap is open; it has happened more than once, and I have known this to happen in action myself. It is suggested that the belt with cartridges in loops all round, if suitable for the Snider might answer, it distributes the weight more equally round the body, and is very handy.

24. The saddle is strong and, serviceable, and indeed, it has much need to be so, especially when men are dismounted, and the saddle is carried on the wagons, but I think it is unnecessarily heavy, and when in marching order, with wallets, valise, carbine and rider, the horse is overloaded; the total weight the animal carries, is approximately, 18 stone, or 250 pounds. It is suggested that the California saddle should be introduced, it is preferred by the police, when they can get it instead of the government pattern, when a fractious or unbroken horse has to be ridden.

25. It is much lighter, the carbine is carried across the pommel, which is probably preferable to using a heavy carbine pucket at the side, which always fills with water in crossing rivers, rusts the carbine and takes long to dry, liable to get broken in brush, and when carried in a wagon.

26. The girth or "cinch" is of hair very broad and open, the stirrup is of wood, and less liable to chill the feet in frosty weather; there are no buckles, a great improvement, the blanket is carried under the saddle, fits the horse's back and does not roll from side to side from which a horse is so liable to get saddle galled, especially by a bad rider who sits by balance alone.



27. The price of these saddles is said to be about 22 to 25 dollars, it is suggested that a few might be tried and reported upon.

28. An improved method of carrying the carbine is that long adopted by the Cape Frontier Police, to hang the carbine up and down under the arm suspended by a cross belt, the butt coming close under the arm-pit.

### Tents

29. It is suggested that the Hudson Bay pattern tent should be adopted, to contain 8 men.

30. During summer, tents are hardly wanted, and in winter are useless without stoves. The American army has a good pattern stove at Fort Shaw, conical in shape fitting in to each other, and easily carried. An expedition taking the field in winter should be provided with them and carry some coal.

But there are a few other subjects to be referred to before closing this Report which I regret to see has assumed proportions far beyond my intention.

31. A depot in Ontario, occupation of a post at Railway Crossing, South Saskatchewan, as Main Central depot for grain and provisions. A very important central point connected with the future settlement of the country; cultivation round each post, to avoid as far as possible transporting oats; improved saddlery, clothing, arms, a different mode of carrying carbine; officers' swords; transport; management of 6 men per Troop as teamsters and farmers; equitation; instruction in common law, and serving subpoenas and executing warrants; armourers; medical officers for outposts and to prescribe for Indians etc; general occupation of the country with a view to settlement; treaties with all Indian tribes; ferry boats on lines of direct communication; reduction of sub-inspectors from two to one per Troop, when constables are better educated at the depot and qualified to command small detached parties; recruiting among rural population, instead of towns, except for clerks; purchase of country horses, instead of from dealers; trial of Montana and Washington horses; small library and reading rooms at outposts; a barrack canteen where draft ale, tobacco, and minor necessities can be procured by the police only; complaints and their explanation; officers horses; savings banks.

32. I think it will be found by and by that two officers per troop will be sufficient; after constables have the means of acquiring a thorough training at the Depot, they could command small parties, with an officer over several. Of course it will be found preferable to avoid small detachments. I think that only as a temporary measure should any detachment be less than a troop, because men must remain to hold the post when a party is required for active duty.

33. Upon the subject of the complaint of the men at Fort MacLeod when taken into consideration I think the wear and tear on the long prairie march should also be considered, the tradesmen's accounts have been examined and it seems that 25 dollars a man would be a fair sum to reimburse them. Every article was charged at a very high price, and the men not having their pay in cash were at the mercy of the trader having to get credit for what they wanted.

34. I like the dress of the Mounted Police, scarlet frock, cord breeches, long brown boots and a brown cotton fatigue suit, (better cotton than linen) - the latter when wet causes chills and fevers; white helmet, the forage cap can be improved, and also prefer the tunic shape to the frock, it is more "dressy" and the men take some pride in looking smart. At



present there is a want of uniformity in the dress. I am told the uniform lately sent is excellent, but I hardly concur in the system of allowing officers to wear the same as the men with the addition of gold lace - it may do for service but I think a neat full-dress uniform should be adopted, not costly, but such as they could feel becoming their position in society. I believe the officers desire this improvement. I think the simpler the adornment of lace the better.

35. It is suggested that the officers should wear swords, which have a great effect upon the Indian mind and a shoulder belt with a pouch for field glasses.

Indeed I think constables should have a field glass, they are absolutely necessary on the prairie; a great number of Indians and others now wear them, and the police are therefore at a disadvantage without this aid.

36. In conclusion with the Sturgeon Creek post I learned that Inspector Jarvis was directed to find a suitable site anywhere on the south bank of the north Saskatchewan within 30 miles of Edmonton, where there was plenty of timber and land fit for cultivation on a large scale; he accordingly pitched upon this spot, having plenty of building timber, and fuel wood at hand, also being a centre for probable future large settlements on both sides of the river, having the further advantage of affording the easiest passage of the river, which opposite Edmonton is very difficult, owing to the precipitous nature of the lofty banks of sand on both sides; he was further led to believe this post might be the centre for 3 troops eventually, with a large provision and store depot. Accordingly, he entered into contract, and completed quarters for 3 or 4 officers and about 30 men, having likewise arranged to build stabling for 50 horses.

37. The buildings had however been stopped, before my arrival, awaiting orders, though the timber is on the premises.

38. I regret having missed meeting Inspector Jarvis except for half an hour on the Red Deer River, returning from an interview with the Assistant Commissioner, because though I have before stated that no complaints were made to me, yet I had been told that there were grounds for complaint at this post, which from delicacy I refrained from inquiring into in that officer's absence. I have, however, made Assistant Commissioner McLeod acquainted with the matter, and he will doubtless do all that is required.

39. My information at this post quite supports my opinion of the necessity for a party of dismounted men with each troop, engaged as teamsters and farmers, the men of the police protested against farming, and though they eventually conceded, it occasioned unpleasant relations, for a time, between them and their officers.

40. Clothing of all kinds is much needed here, the men had suffered from want of it, no provisions, except flour, had been in store for four months. Owing to the men's pay being issued by money orders they are thrown entirely into the hands of the Hudson's Bay officials, who charge enormously for everything, having no competition; the absence of a specie currency in this district is to be regretted, as the settlers are equally, with the police, subject to this tax, in consequence of being unable to deal direct with traders from want of it.

41. But the great desideratum for the more useful and comprehensive development of the force will be the establishment of a depot for young officers, recruits, and perhaps, remount horses, in either the vacant barracks of Toronto or Kingston.

42. I am satisfied such a force requires this important nucleus to enable recruits to join their troops with a fair knowledge of their duties.

43. So many details are absolutely essential and I have but mentioned one or two obvious, and, by some, it may be thought trivial ones, that it is impossible to find time to instruct men as they should be among so many important daily duties. An experienced Adjutant and Riding Master, thoroughly masters of their work, may do much if attentive, but detached, as this force always must be, from the character of its service, a depot is the main thing needful.

44. The ox-trains should as far as possible, be under the control of the Commissioner. The present system of making Winnipeg the headquarters of the ox-train has been unavoidable hitherto; but it is attended with expense in the wintering of stock there besides leaving the police with little transport, if suddenly required to act.

I have the honor to be, Sir,  
Your obedient servant,

*E. Selby Smyth*  
Major General





